areas which require sophisticated technology or which would help increase the country's export potential.

Spread of Epidemics

1404. SHRI B.K. HARI PRASAD: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the seriousness of the various epidemics recurring in the country as brought out by noted writer Ujwala Samrath in the April, 1990 issue of "Health for Millions";

(b) whether Government would create an infrastructure to check these diseases more firmly; and

(c) whether for each major disease a separate NGO-based grass-root level set up, with full Government support in every district/state will be formed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI RASHEED MASOOD): (a) to (c) The Government has seen the Editorial of "Health for Millions" April, 1990 issue published by Voluntary Health Association of India. Epidemics are known from times immemorial. In present days, number of epidemics/outbreaks are more often reported because of better diagnostic facilities, better communications and better disease surveillance system, due to which even small focal outbreak comes to light. The Government has established a large health infrastructure having a wide network of hospitals, Primary Health Centres, Sub-centres and dispensaries to achieve "Health for All by 2,000 A.D." Government also is encouraging voluntary efforts in this regard and supports a large number of voluntary Organisations to improve the health care delivery.

Efficacy of Vitamin A Pills

1405. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a recent study made by the National Institute of Nutrition has completely exposed the claims being made by multi-national drug manufacturers marketing synthetic Vitamin A pills that these pills could reduce child-mortality in undernourished communities by as much as 30 per cent; and

(b) if so, what is being done to stop these manufacturers from exploiting the innocent public?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI RASHEED MASOOD): (a) and (b) Studies conducted in Indonesia show that administration of six monthly doses of 2.00 lakh. International Units of Vitamin A reduces the mortality rate among children by about 30% when compared to controls. The International Vitamin A Consultative Group stated that Vitamin A prevents nutritional blindness and contributes significantly to child health and survival. However, the mechanism by which it has effect on reduction of mortality is not clear.

The study conducted by Arvind Eye Hospital in Thiruchirapalli District of Tamilnadu showed significant reduciton of mortality rate among children who were given frequent small doses of Vitamin. However a study conducted by National Institute of Nutrition did not show any effect on child mortality with Vit. A supplement.

In this context it is stated that six monthly doses of Vit. A (2.00 lakh I.U.) is given to children 1—5 years to prevent blindness a ong them under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Prophylaxis Against Blindness duc

to Vit. A deficiency. 30 million children are envisaged to be covered under the scheme during 1990-91. Further, nutrition education is provided for intake of all foods with a adquate Vit. through multi media activities e.g. radio, T. V. posters, pamphlets etc. and through interpersonal communication by medical and para-medical workers working throughout the country.

Cancer Patients in India

1406. SHRI S. S AHLUWALIA Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of cancer patients in the Country;

(b) which type of cancer has largely affected the patients; and

(c) what preventive steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI RASHEED MASOOD): (a) Reliable statistical data regarding number of cancer patients in the country is not availble. However, it is estimated that there are about 1.5 to 2 million cancer patients in the country and almost half a million new cases occur every year.

(b) As per the report of National Cancer Registry Project of ICMR, the main types of cancer affecting male patients relates to Pharynx and Oral cavity while for the female patients they primarily relate to cervix and breast.

(c) During the 8th Five Year Plan more emphasis is being given on prevention and early detection of cancer, particularly in the rural areas under the National Cancer Control Programme. Various health education measures are being taken to educate the people to create awareness amongst them about the likely causes of cancer and the need for early detection. The ill-effects of tobacco smoking are also being highlighted.

Prices of Commodities

@1407. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether more than 260 of the 447 commodities has registered increase in prices;

(b) if so, whether the increase was 10 per cent or more percent during the period ending june, 1990;

(c) what are the details of the 80 commodities which have registered 10 percent rise;

(d) whether there was any decline in the prices of some of the essential commodities; and

(e) what steps are being taken to check them?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) to (c) Out of the 447 commodities included in the basket of goods for the current official Wholesale Price Index (WPI) series (base 1981-82), 323 commodities registered increases in their Wholesale price indices during the period June 1989 to June 1990. The increase was 10% or more in the case of 131 out of the aforesaid 323 commodities. A statement providing details of these 131 commodities is enclosed (*see below*). This statement provides information as to the description of the commodities as also the actual (provisional) percentage variation in the wholesale price indices registered by these Items during the period June 1989 to June 1990.

(d) During the period June 1989 to June 1990, in all 45 commodities registered decline in their wholesale price indices. Some of the important commodities among these are: rice, bread, suji and maida.

@Previously Unstarred Question 629 Transferred from the 10th August 1990.